



SPOTLIGHT

On The Downing Clinic of Clarkston

By Clark Young, III



Laura Kovalcik, D.O.

One woman's vision has become a successful medical practice in Clarkston that continues to flourish and grow as new patients become aware of integrative medicine. The Downing Clinic was founded in 1992 by Dr. Nedra Downing, an osteopathic physician who believed there was more to helping patients than simply prescribing pharmaceutical medicines.

Her belief was that by integrating old world medicinal practices such as natural herbs and vitamins with today's technology, she could help more people live healthier on a daily basis.

Now, 19 years later, her daughter, Dr. Laura Kovalcik, a board certified internist, is carrying on that philosophy as she practices in the newly located Downing Clinic on Sashabaw Road in Clarkston.

In their own literature, the physicians explain how their goal is: "to help people live healthier lives through natural treatments, enhanced nutrition and reduced dependence on prescription medicines."

Dr. Downing graduated as a pharmacist from the University of Michigan before turning her sites on medical school at Michigan State. Once she began practicing, she found it difficult to find work where her medicine and nutritional interests could be combined, says her daughter, Dr. Kovalcik.

Dr. Kovalcik, who also graduated with her mother and sister at the same time from MSU, began working as an internist in the hospital setting for her first eight years.

"I realized I wasn't helping people, so luckily I had my mother as a role model and knew there were other things I could do. I was lucky enough to make a career move and buy the practice from my mom," says Dr. Kovalcik.

Dr. Kovalcik was disappointed in the traditional approach to treating sick patients. "They don't teach you how to fix anything. You are trained how to use medicine and then new medicines, and you are trained to think what kind of medicine to give people. But if you look for the root cause of the problem, you can find ways to use less drugs."

What is different at the Downing Clinic?

"We try herbs, vitamins and natural approaches first," says Dr. Kovalcik. "People come here looking for a natural approach with the ability to use medication if they need to. Some patients have been to other places and come here as a last resort, others are here because they want a different take on their treatment, and some just want to get healthier and stay that way."

Patients who walk in the door to the Downing Clinic experience personal, individualized treatment plans. They are given different tests to determine hormone levels, vitamin deficiencies and others to create a profile of the patient, says Dr. Kovalcik.

"It's not right for everybody, but if someone is interested in natural approaches, it works well for both of us," states Dr. Kovalcik. "The patients are more educated and have figured out what they want. I want this to be a partnership. I don't want to tell people what to do, I want them to ask questions and be more involved in their treatment."

Like other integrative medicine practices, vitamins and natural supplements are available at the Downing Clinic. However, Dr. Kovalcik says her practice offers many brands of vitamins based on quality.

"I don't carry just one line or brand of vitamins. We spend a lot of time picking out the best of whatever the brand is, so a variety

of companies are represented, and they are physician-selected," says Dr. Kovalcik.

"We also have protein powders that are considered medical food. If someone is having issues with blood sugar, or high cholesterol, inflammation, etc., these are very nice, high quality, and considered medical food. It can be used as a snack or a meal."

New patients are welcome at the Downing Clinic and their website outlines the philosophy of the practice, services and the physicians' education, All of which Dr. Kovalcik encourages people to view and research before coming in.

With a knowledgeable staff and personnel committed to improving their patient outcomes, the Downing Clinic offers an alternative to traditional western medicine. By combining eastern and western medicinal practices, patients can get better and feel better.

"Now I'm helping people and people get better," says Dr. Kovalcik proudly.

The Downing Clinic is located at 5715 Bella Rose Boulevard, Suite 100, in Clarkston, MI. Their office hours are from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. Please visit their website online for more information at www.TheDowningClinic.com.

